FARM AND GARDEN.

The Blight in Orchards.

A correspondent writes to the *Prairie Farmer:* "I have had the care of an apple orchard for more than forty years, and never lost a single apple tree in that length of time from blight. Several years ago some of my trees were badly afflicted with blight. The work of cutting out the affected wood was too great for me, consequently I left the trees to live or die. In one or two years from that time no injury could be seen. Since then I have paid no attention to it, and consider it of minor importance. The pear blight is quite different, for when it kills the new wood it does not stop there, like the apple tree blight, but goes on to the destruction of the tree. Some varieties of apples are worse affected than others, even when they are all mixed through each other. I have never known the blight to injure the vitality of a tree, but it makes it look bad.

Light and Flavor.

As showing that light is not necessary to conforming or flavor-development of fruits that have completed their growth, we find, says a contributor to the New York *Tribune*, that grapes inclosed in bags of thick paper, or even in bags covered black with printers' ink, from early June till gathered in October, have better color and more refined flavor than those left uncovered. Pears ripen better in a cool room, and covered with a cloth, than on the tree, and their color is finer. They are less liable to rot, and keep longer. If picked just as soon as they readily detach at the natural suture when lifted to the horizontal, and laid in some close material which will not impart flavor or induce mould—sifted coal ashes, for example, or roasted sawdust—and placed where the temperature and air-moisture will continue even, they will keep long, according to the sort. If the stem be broken and the fruit uninclosed it is apt to shrivel and lose its flavor with its juice. Winter pears should be left on the trees as late as frost will permit. Few know what excellence they have and how well they can be kept all through winter if good sorts, well grown and well stored.

Weeding Out Poor Stock.

What kind of stock the farmer sells has more to do with success or failure than any other one item in farm management. We think most farmers are learning to be more particular on this point than formerly. It is no longer easy for the butcher or drovers to ride through the country, picking out the choicest animals, paying a trifle more for them, and leaving the farmer the scrubs. The reverse of this is now so often the case that the business of buying cattle and other live stock in the East has to some extent gone out of fashion. It is easier to order dressed beef from the far West, or bring the live stock on cars and butcher them here

One of the results of this is that farmers are often left with the animals not worth keeping, and yet not easy to sell. Unless a farmer is a pretty close calculator this condition of affairs may continue year after year, until the stock has, as the saying is, "more than eaten its head off." It is easy to see that such animals must be a heavy drawback upon successful farming. No matter how good the crops may be, whatever is fed to inferior animals brings little return. In olden times there was less competition and a larger margin of profit. Then poor stock did not matter so much, for everybody had more or less of it. With the improvements that have now been made in domestic animals, it is more necessary than ever before to get and keep the best.

It costs more too than it used to, though not proportionably more than its increased excellence warrants. The farmers who complain that pedigreed stock of good strains costs too much, ignore its productiveness. This is especially true of cows for milk and butter. Many a farmer can well afford to sell off his three, four or half a dozen ordinary animals and put their price in one. The progeny from the one will be worth for raising more than from all that he previously had. He will save expense of feeding superfluous animals and extra labor in care and milking. One thoroughbred cow may thus be the foundation of a valuable herd.

It is the same with all other farm animals. No good farming can be done with poor horses. If the team is inefficient, the fact hinders all farm work and causes it to be done at a loss. It is one of the disadvantages of continuing long in the farming business, that unless the farmer is pretty wide awake he will soon find his stables filled with animals past their best service. No one would buy such horses to begin farming with, but having them, the farmer sees a yearly depreciation of value which he vainly attempts to recover. A year ago a horse that might readily have sold for $150 is now less salable at $100. Two or three years later he will be an old horse, salable, perhaps, for $50, yet really not worth taking as a gift. When a horse from age or infirmity goes below $80 or $100 in price, the man must be in hard stress indeed who will depend on him to do a season's work on the farm

Yet it is such animals, not merely of horses, but of other farm stock, that poor beginners mainly start out with. They take the leavings of the rich, and nobody ever made money by this method. The only exception to this is in animals past their prime, of good blood and not past breeding age. Sometimes from such valuable young stock may be bred, and the profit on the young animals more than offsets the depreciation of the old. As a rule, however, all animals much past their prime should be disposed of as soon as possible. Old horses that have done faithful service may be killed in some painless manner, rather than sold to be ill-treated by strangers. Killing without fattening, saving only the hide and using the carcass as manure, may often be a better means of disposing superannuated cows than trying to winter or even to fatten them. Unusually, however, some one will be found willing to buy such animals and will invariably pay more than they are worth. This is one of the ways whereby the poor increase their poverty, as has been the usual rule through every age and in every country.—*Cultivator.*

Farm and Garden Notes.

A vegetable cellar is not a good place in which to keep butter.

Remember and plant tomatoes in sandy soil, not in rich loams.

Sweet potatoes are asserted by some to be better than corn for fattening pigs.

Dandelions in the pasture are recommended by the *North British Agriculturist.*

The mangold-wurtzel is said to be the original beet, and it grows wild on some of the islands of the Atlantic.

Pop-corn is said to be better for poultry feed than any other species of maize. It contains a larger proportion of albumen.

Mr. A. S. Fuller thinks the Japanese persimmon likely to prove a valuable fruit in the Southern States, but too tender for the North.

Fine manure is better than coarse, and hens are the best agents for breaking it up. Scatter wheat over the pile and keep the fowls scratching.

It is suggested that much poor butter is made in farm dairies because farmers do not provide their wives and daughters with improved appliances.

The nature of plaster is to attract moisture from the atmosphere, and if any nitrogen exist therein it will be absorbed and held for plant use.

According to Mr. Berckmans, peach yellows are unknown in Georgia and other Southern States and he thinks it likely that climate has much to do with the disease.

Prof. Stover says a ration of thirty pounds of pumpkins per cow, daily, will increase the flow and improve the quality of milk. More than this quantity should not be given.

Some insects are carnivorous in their habits, and feed upon those which destroy our farm crops. For example, the ferocious "lion-beetle" preys upon the dstructive cutworm.

A few years ago 150 pounds of butter per annum was considered a large yield for a single cow, but now four or five times that amount are not unusual, and much larger records have been made.

A Wisconsin farmer took his stock through a hard winter, after a dry summer, by storing every bit of corn fodder, putting all his straw under cover for feed, and buying liberally of wheat bran.

There are four practical methods of improving dairy stock, viz.: By increasing the feed, by better care, by selection, and above all by breeding. The last is by far the most effective, practical and progressive.

Every one knows the mischief which the corn or ball worm plays in the cornfield. It is well to know that among the natural enemies of this worm are the blue bird, the orchard, the Baltimore oriole, the king bird and the quail.

L. S. Coffin says, don't feed so much dry hay. Run hay through the feed-cutter, mixed with ground grain, and moistened. This will keep a horse in better condition than if fed twice the quantity without preparation.

A practical farmer says that in setting posts where great solidity is required he uses gravel and small stones to fill around the posts and then runs in thin water-lime mortar, thus virtually imbedding the post in rock, preventing decay and insuring solidity.

Some experiments in the feeding of cattle carried out by Prof. Wrightson, at the College or Agriculture, Downton, England, afford additional evidence of the superior economy of finishing cattle off for the butcher at an early age. A beast intended for the block should never be allowed to go back.

In securing transplanted trees it is advised against driving stakes down among the roots, near the side of the stem. Use three galvanized wires fixed to a collar at a convenient height up the tree, and fasten them to stumps driven in the ground at a certain distance from the stem, thus avoiding the roots altogether.

The *Farmer* (England) says: "Old cows that have been milked to the very last are not worth much to the butcher. If a cow of about thirteen years of age could be had for nothing she could hardly bring in any profit by fattening, for in proportion as her life becomes exhausted so will digestion gradually fail."

Experiments by Professor H. Shelton, of the Kansas State College, have demonstrated that finely-cut corn fodder is much less attractive and palatable to animals than that cut into coarser lengths. The uneaten portion of fodder cut one-fourth inch was 53 per cent.; of that cut one inch, 36 per cent.; two inches, 24 per cent

Farmer Stahl, of Quincy, Ill., says the best soil for wheat is magnesian limestone, or a limestone clay, but it can be profitably grown on nearly every fertile-drained soil. On soils lacking silica, the straw lodges; lacking in lime, the berry is not plump. He adds, growing wheat on undrained land is foolishness. If not drained naturally drain the land artificially.

The English co-operatives have a bank whose transactions amount to $80,000,000 a year. Their 900,000 members receive an annual profit of $15,000,000. Their profits during the last twenty-four years have been $50,000,000.

SELECT SIFTINGS.

Kentucky has a banana fiend, who recently ate thirty-four bananas in one hour.

Sumatra has a flower which grows to nine feet in circumference and weighs fifteen pounds.

Herodotus, the first Greek historian, and father of history, lived, according to Cicero, about 450.

The eggs of a single sturgeon, counted by Frank Buckland, numbered 921,600, and weighed forty-five pounds.

The first historical mention of soap occurs in Pliny and Galen, the former attributing its invention to the Gauls.

In the superstition of sailor men there is a connection between white horses and preachers. Both are believed to bring bad luck to the vessel carrying them.

Louis Bayden, a blind man who died at Worcester, Mass., the other day, had his sense of touch so developed that he could tell the denomination of a bank-note by feeling it, and in weeding a large garden he could always distinguish a young vegetable plant from a weed.

Next year (1888) will be a peculiar one in this respect: That the last three numerals which compose it will be the same figures, a circumstance which can only occur once in a century, or, more strictly speaking, once in every 111 years, as it will be 111 years before another "three of a kind" (1999) will be reached.

There is a colored man in a New York hospital who has a patch of light colored skin on his back. It was grafted there, he having lost the original cuticle by falling against a roller in a shoe factory. The pieces were taken from the arms of a young medical student. At first the transplanted skin remained white, but it is said to be slowly turning black.

An animal with the head and tail of an alligator, and the back and claws of a tortoise, is on exhibition at the store of George Hulse, a Liverpool (England) importer of turtles. It is called an alligator tortoise, and was captured by an English sailor in the swamps near New Orleans. The English naturalists have never seen anything like it before, and are trying to buy it for a public museum.

It Pays to Think.

A striking instance of the extent to which labor saving machinery is carried nowadays, says the *Industrial Journal*, is shown in the tin can industry. Everybody knows that tin cans are manufactured by machinery. One of the machines used in the process solders the longitudinal seams of the cans at the rate of fifty a minute, the cans rushing along in a continuous stream. Now, of course, a drop or two of solder is left on the can. The drop on the outside can be easily cleaned away, but it is not so easy to secure the drop left on the inside. It wouldn't do, of course, to retard the speed of the work—better waste the drop, it is only a trifle, anyhow, and to ninety-men in a one hundred it would not seem worth a minute's attention. The hundredth man worked for a firm using one of these machines, and he set about devising an ingenious arrangement for wiping the inside of the can, thereby saving that drop of solder and leaving none to come in contact with the contents of the can. He was encouraged by his employers to patent his invention, did so, and has already received several thousand dollars in royalties for its use. As the machine solders 20,000 cans a day, the solder saved by his invention amounted to $15 a day. It pays to think as you work.

The barbaric idea of piercing the lobe of the ear for the insertion of a jewel is no longer considered desirable, and the fashion of wearing earrings will probably be a thing of the past before many years.
